

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A sheet feeder comprising:

a sheet receptacle disposed at the flank of a main apparatus for holding sheets thereon;

5 a feeding device rotatably arranged at the flank for sending sheets from the sheet receptacle into the main apparatus; and

an urging mechanism for pressing the feeding means by transmission of the drive force from a predetermined drive source,

10 characterized in that the feeding device is rotatably shifted between an operating position in which sheet feeding action is made and a retracted position in which the device is retracted at the flank of the main apparatus while a predetermined waiting position is disposed between the operating position and the retracted position, and the feeding device is urged by the urging mechanism, at least when set at the operating position and the waiting position and is freed from the urging of the urging mechanism when placed between the waiting position and the retracted position.

15 2. The sheet feeder according to Claim 1, wherein the urging mechanism has a predetermined range of play so that the rotation of the feeding device from the waiting position to the retracted position can be made within the predetermined range of play.

25 3. The sheet feeder according to Claim 2, wherein the urging

mechanism includes a projected portion joined to one of either the drive source or the feeding device and a hollowed portion joined to the other for loosely receiving the projected portion, so as to define the predetermined range of play.

5        4.    An image forming apparatus comprising a sheet feeder according to Claim 1.

5.    A sheet feeder comprising:

        a sheet receptacle disposed at the flank of a main apparatus for holding sheets thereon;

10        a feeding device rotatably arranged at the flank and set at a predetermined operating position to send sheets from the sheet receptacle into the main apparatus; and

        a cover member covering the feeding device, characterized in that the cover member is provided on the flank side of the main apparatus, and the feeding device is rotated in linkage with the cover member when the cover member is rotated from the predetermined usage position toward the flank so that the cover member and the feeding device are retracted at the flank of the main apparatus.

15        6.    The sheet feeder according to Claim 5, wherein the cover member and the feeding device have respective first and second engaging portions engaging each other, and engagement between the first and second engaging portions makes the feeding device rotate in linkage with the cover member.

20        7.    The sheet feeder according to Claim 6, wherein the first

and second engaging portions are constructed so that they do not engage each other when the cover member is located in the range from the usage position to a predetermined starting position of engagement or when the feeding device is located in the range from the operating position to a predetermined starting position of engagement, and that they can engage each other when the cover member is located within the range from the starting position of engagement to the retracted position at which the cover member is retracted into the flank of the main apparatus and when the feeding device is located with the range from the starting position of engagement to the retracted position at which the feeding device is retracted into the flank of the main apparatus.

8. The sheet feeder according to Claim 7, wherein the feeding device is set stationary at a predetermined waiting position between the starting position of engagement and the retracted position when it does not perform sheet feed.

9. The sheet feeder according to Claim 7, wherein the rotational centers of the cover member and the feeding device and the first and second engaging portions are arranged in such geometry that the trace of the first engaging portion during rotation of the cover member and the trace of the second engaging portion during rotation of the feeding device overlap only within the range from the starting position of engagement to the position at which the cover member and the feeding

device are retracted.

10. The sheet feeder according to Claim 7, wherein the feeding device is set stationary at a predetermined waiting position between the starting position of engagement and the retracted position in which the feeding device is retracted at the flank of the main apparatus when it does not perform sheet feed.

11. The sheet feeder according to Claim 5, wherein the sheet receptacle is rotatably provided at the flank of the main apparatus, the cover member rotates in linkage with the sheet receptacle when the sheet receptacle is rotated towards the flank, and the feeding device is rotated in linkage with the cover member so that the cover member and the feeding device are retracted at the flank of the main apparatus.

12. An image forming apparatus comprising a sheet feeder according to Claim 5.